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ABSTRACT

Twenty per cent of 8400 questionnaires distributed in 1977 to a representative sampling of public libraries throughout Massachusetts were returned and analyzed. Those returned were entirely representative of the state's population and of the size of library services represented, although communities with the most "active" library services were more likely to return more questionnaires. Few, if any, remarkable differences could be ascertained between men and women, handicapped and non-handicapped persons, ethnic minority and non-minority persons, or among age groups, the three state library regions, or cities and towns of differing sizes, in respect to their opinions about library services and their funding needs. However, the frequency of library use did appear to be least in the Eastern Region, and greatest among the youngest and oldest respondents. The results reflect a general satisfaction with public library services throughout the state, at least insofar as users know what they want and what is available. A clear mandate for increased state and federal financial assistance for libraries is reflected by the data. The 16-item questionnaire is provided, as well as statistical tabulations of responses grouped by sex, handicapped status, ethnic minority status, age group, frequency of library use, library region, and size of community. (Author/JD)

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SURVEY OF MASSACHUSETTS PUBLIC LIBRARY USERS 1977

PREPARED FOR THE
MASSACHUSETTS GOVERNOR'S CONFERENCE
ON LIBRARIES AND INFORMATION SERVICES,
26 - 27 APRIL 1978

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BY

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CONTENTS

Page

INTRODUCTION 1

METHODS 1

RESPONSE RATES 2

Table I. Distribution of population, combined holdings and circulation, and weekly operating hours, by Regions, represented in Survey. . . 3

Table II. Distribution of population, combined holdings and circulation, and weekly operating hours, by municipality population size, represented in Survey. 3

DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF RESPONDENTS 4

OVERALL STATEWIDE QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES 5

Table III. Compiled responses to all questionnaires 6-7

QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES BY SEX 9

Table IV. Questionnaire responses segregated by sex 10

QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES BY HANDICAPPED STATUS 9

Table V. Responses for handicapped and non-handicapped persons 11

QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES BY ETHNIC MINORITY STATUS 9

Table VI. Responses for minority and non-minority respondents 12

QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES BY AGE GROUP 13

Table VII. Responses by age group 14

QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES BY FREQUENCY OF LIBRARY USE 15

Table VIII. Responses by frequency with which respondents visit their local public libraries 16

QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES BY MASSACHUSETTS LIBRARY REGION 17

Table IX. Responses by state library Region 18

QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES BY SIZE OF COMMUNITY 19

Table X. Responses by size of respondents' communities 20

DETAILED ANALYSES 21

HIGHLIGHTS AND SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS 29

SURVEY OF MASSACHUSETTS PUBLIC LIBRARY USERS

INTRODUCTION

This survey was developed as part of the search for information which could be used by the Massachusetts Governor's Conference on Libraries and Information Services in April 1978. The Conference itself was designed to stimulate involvement by users and potential users of libraries and information services in the further development of these resources throughout the state. Its participants were asked to focus their attention on needs for information services, on the roles of libraries in providing information, on problems of access to information, and on determining appropriate fiscal and legislative responsibilities for maintaining and improving all kinds of library services. Each state was required to hold such a Conference before the White House Conference addressing similar concerns on a national level in the fall of 1979.

Because the Governor's Conference was charged to consider the dissemination of all kinds of information, its planners attempted to collect information of many kinds in preparation for the meeting. Conferees will include representatives of many kinds of organizations, institutions, government agencies, and public, academic, and special libraries, but two-thirds of the conferees had to be members of the general public. This survey was designed to elicit information from a much larger segment of the general public than could be invited to participate actively in the Conference, to provide as many opinions from as many people as possible.

The results of the survey will find use in other ways, and by other agencies. For instance, they will provide a baseline from which the Board of Library Commissioners can assess the implementation of its recently published Five-Year Plan for the state's libraries at some time in the future. The data will be helpful to state and federal legislators considering new proposals for library services and for funding them. They will also be helpful to non-governmental agencies such as the Massachusetts Library Association and the Massachusetts Library Trustees Association as they develop their own goals for action and as they work for legislative enactment of new or continuing programs. Other uses of the data will undoubtedly occur to those who have occasion to study them.

METHODS

A questionnaire consisting of sixteen items was developed by the Core Committee representing ten major statewide organizations and institutions relating to libraries and information services. The questions chosen were developed from a less highly structured series of questions distributed in Pennsylvania, with special attention being given to problems unique to Massachusetts. In addition, opportunities for cross-tabulations of responses were built into the newer instrument in order to ascertain the reasons for selected responses.

Each item in the survey questionnaire was cast in the form of a statement, and respondents were invited to indicate whether they agreed, disagreed, or had no opinion about each statement. The sixteen items were then arranged in a random order in order to lessen the chance that the response to one item would affect the response to the next.

Respondents were also asked to indicate their age, sex, city or town of residence, whether they are members of an ethnic minority group (not specified) or are physically handicapped, and to indicate the frequency with which they usually visit their local public libraries. Every effort was made to assure anonymity of individual responses; the only person to see the individual responses was the key punch operator who tabulated each questionnaire on IBM cards for data processing. However, respondents who might be interested in participating in the Governor's Conference were invited to submit their names and addresses, while still assuring them that their responses to the questionnaire portion of the survey instrument would be kept confidential.

Using generally acceptable demographic sampling techniques, 8400 questionnaires were distributed in October, 1977, to 78 public libraries chosen to be representative of the three library regions in the Eastern, Central, and Western parts of the state, and also representative of the six standard population size groups, ranging from towns of less than 5,000 persons to cities of over 100,000 persons. Questionnaire forms were distributed according to a weighted formula which took the size of the population served by each library into account, and each library was given about one month in which to have patrons complete and return its allotment. Questionnaires could be returned by the distributing libraries in bulk, or, if the respondent wished, by mail. Participating librarians were instructed to make every effort to insure that respondents at their respective libraries were as representative a cross-section of their users as possible; librarians and library trustees were asked not to respond.

The responses were coded and entered on IBM punch cards, and the data were analyzed on the Boston University IBM 370/158 using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences Program for tabulations and cross-tabulations. Chi-squared analyses utilizing only "agree" and "disagree" opinions were also run (see section on Detailed Analyses), in order to obtain stronger statistical indices of significance. By omitting the "no opinion" responses in this way it was possible to focus selectively on the inter-relationships between firm opinions about items taken two at a time.

RESPONSE RATES

Libraries in ten communities (12.8% of those to whom questionnaires were distributed) declined to participate, all in towns of 10,000 or less population, and chiefly for logistic reasons. Nevertheless, questionnaires were received from some of these libraries: one each from three libraries, seven from one, and 39 from another. No replies were received from twelve towns whose librarians had not declined to participate, and only one each from six others. Therefore, a total of 23 towns of the 78 on the original distribution list (21.5%) submitted no or only one reply each, and 55

(70.5%) submitted from three to 276 replies. The total 1661 questionnaires returned for analysis represent an overall response rate of 19.8%.(Similar numbers of persons are involved in most nationwide opinion polls.)

RESPONSES REPRESENT:	EASTERN REGION	CENTRAL REGION	WESTERN REGION
% of Total Populations Sampled:	72.6	13.3	14.0
% of Library Holdings Sampled:	75.4	11.2	13.4
% of Combined Circulation Sampled:	72.4	12.0	15.6
Mean ± S.D. Open Hours/Week	60 ± 14	40 ± 19	34 ± 27
No. of Libraries and/or Towns:	32	14	15
% of All Replies*:	69.7	13.1	16.8

TABLE I
Distribution of population, combined library holdings (in number of volumes) and circulation, and hours of library operation each week, by state library Region, represented in the 1661 questionnaires submitted. * 0.4% of the respondents did not indicate their respective towns. The data were segregated from the 1976 Annual Report of the Board of Library Commissioners (for 1975).

As Table I shows, the responses were proportional to the populations and several gross measures of library activity in the state's three Regions. The responses from the 55 (out of a possible 78) participating municipalities were from 93.6% of the total population asked to participate.

	0-5,000	5,000-10,000	10,000-25,000	25,000-50,000	50,000-100,000	100,000+
% Population	2.1	2.9	9.3	13.8	13.8	58.0
% Holdings	2.2	2.1	8.0	14.4	8.0	65.0
% Circulation	2.6	3.7	13.8	21.4	15.2	43.3
Mean ± S.D. Open Hours/Week	22±14	45±14	59±9	70±4	69±1	68±4
No. Libraries	19	9	14	9	4	6
% of All Replies	10.0	8.4	19.0	18.1	13.7	30.4

TABLE II
Distribution of population, combined library holdings (in number of volumes) and circulation, and hours of library operation each week, by municipality population size, represented in the 1661 questionnaires submitted.

Table II shows that the larger cities were relatively under-represented, and the small towns were relatively over-represented by 1½ to five times the expected proportions. Appropriate correlation coefficient computations showed that the response rates were proportional to population size, and to size of library holdings, and, even more strongly, to circulation size. Response rates were unrelated to weekly open hours. Therefore, those libraries that make the largest contributions to the state's total circulation provided the largest fractions of responses to the survey, over and above the town's mere contribution to the state's population. It can, perhaps, be inferred that those libraries with the greatest "activity index" stimulated more responses from among their regular patrons, whose enthusiasms for their programs or resources may well be greatest throughout the state.

All the evidence from the Survey suggests that the 1661 respondents made careful, thoughtful replies, and that they had good reasons for their opinions. Any faults in the results are more likely to have been caused by deficiencies in the design of the questionnaire itself than in the attention given to it by the respondents whose opinions are analyzed below.

DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF RESPONDENTS

Two-thirds (67.2%) of the respondents were female; the overall ratio was, then, 2.1 females to every male, increasing to 3.1 in the smallest towns. Women, then, are in the distinct majority among public library users.

The respondents ranged in age from twelve to 87. Their mean ± Standard Deviation was 42.9 ± 16.5 years; thus, the middle two-thirds ranged in age from 26 to 59. The age distribution was about equal among the three Regions. However, among the six standard population size categories, there were more older respondents from the smallest towns and more younger persons in the largest cities. Of respondents answering item no. 3, 50.7% indicated that they have children living at home with them and 41.5% answered item no. 14, indicating that they have children in their local public schools.

Physically handicapped persons constituted 2.7% of the entire sample, ranging up to 3.1% in the largest cities and 4.4% in the Central Region.

Members of ethnic minorities made up 9.3% of the questionnaire respondents. They were, as expected, most numerous in the Eastern Region (10.7%) and in the largest cities (15.0%). (In 1970, according to U.S. census data, 3.73% of the Massachusetts population consisted of blacks or members of other non-white races.)

The respondents' distributions by Region and by size of municipality are given in Tables I and II and discussed above.

The median frequency of library usage was computed by plotting the probit of the cumulated per cent frequency of response to each given frequency with which respondents said they usually visited their local public libraries

against the logarithm of visitation frequency, and interpolating at probit 5 (see advanced biometrics texts for this method). The estimated frequency of library usage for the entire state is 1.73 times per month. Of the respondents, 1.1% visit their libraries seldom or almost never, 6.7% monthly, 31.6% biweekly, and 60.6% weekly. These data suggest that more than 90% of library users should be very familiar with their public libraries' facilities and services. (It should be noted here that the only comparable statistic from another state indicates that 16% of the population of Nebraska do not use their public libraries. However, it was not possible to ascertain precisely this population in the Massachusetts study, because the questionnaires were distributed only through local public libraries).

Median library use is least frequent in the Eastern Region (1.28 times/month), and greatest in the Western Region (1.78 times/month). There were no significant differences in frequency of library use among the small, intermediate, and large municipalities, nor among the two sexes. Respondents aged 12 to 20 visit their libraries much more often (2.52 times/month) than do older respondents, although persons aged 61 to 87 tend to use libraries somewhat more frequently (1.89 times/month) than the statewide average.

Of the 1661 respondents to the questionnaire, 27.3% volunteered their names and addresses so that they could be considered as potential participants in the Governor's Conference.

OVERALL STATEWIDE QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES

Table III shows the frequencies of agreement, disagreement, or no opinion for all sixteen questionnaire items for the entire state. Subsequent tables will show the responses by sex, Region, population etc.

By and large, the public is satisfied that it gets what it wants from the state's public libraries, although certain qualifications to this generalization will be noted below. The respondents were especially satisfied with their librarians' abilities to meet their users' needs (item 1), with availability of recreational reading materials (item 2), with children's services (item 3), and with referencing and other special informational needs (item 8). Only 3/4 of library users who need to got books through interlibrary loan (ILL) (item 4), and only 2/3 of users who need to make use of reciprocal borrowing or use privileges (item 11). (Satisfaction with recreational reading materials was 90%, which is like the comparable figure for Nebraska, 81%; for special information needs, satisfaction was 71% in Massachusetts and 75% in Nebraska).

It is, perhaps, curious that adequacy of public libraries for their entire communities, even allowing for "no opinion" responses (item 13) is less than adequacy for individual respondents' needs (items 1,2,3), although adequacy of referencing and other special needs is also lower (item 8).

TABLE III

Compiled responses to all questionnaires submitted for analysis. N = 1661. In this table each item is quoted verbatim from the original questionnaire; in subsequent Tables an abbreviated form will be used. In the original questionnaire, a random order of items was given; in this and in subsequent Tables the items are arranged in decreasing frequency of "Agree" responses to facilitate the reader's understanding of the relative "priorities" assigned each item by respondents throughout the state.

	% AGREE	% DO NOT AGREE	% with NO OPINION
1. On the whole, the staff in my local library are sufficiently able to meet my needs.	93.0	5.1	2.0
2. My own needs for recreational reading are well served at my local public library.	89.7	8.5	1.8
3. My children's needs are well served at my local public library (leave blank if you have no children living at home with you).	82.4	8.0	9.6
4. If the special information, or book, I need is not available in my local public library, the librarian usually gets it for me from another library.	76.1	8.0	15.9
5. I believe users of my local library should have free access to printed materials of all kinds, regardless of the political views or sexual content expressed in them.	75.2	20.1	4.8
6. The state should provide more assistance to my local public library in the form of direct financial aid.	73.0	11.1	15.9
7. The state should provide more assistance to my local public library in the form of books made available for circulation.	73.0	11.7	15.3
8. My own needs for special information (e.g., medical, business, how-to-do-it, etc.) are well served at my local public library.	70.9	22.3	6.8
9. My local public library seems adequate to the needs of my community as a whole, whether or not it serves my own needs well.	70.6	17.5	11.9
10. The federal government should take a greater role in financing or otherwise improving local library service.	65.8	20.9	13.3
11. Sometimes I must go to other libraries (public, private, academic, government, etc.) for at least some of my information needs.	63.8	28.8	7.4
12. Computer technology (e.g., article citations, indices, links with other libraries, etc.) would benefit either me or my community if available in my local public library.	58.4	9.2	32.5
13. My local public library should have more audio-visual materials (e.g., films, recordings).	53.3	15.6	31.1
14. My children's needs are well served at their school libraries (leave blank if you have no children in local public schools).	44.3	35.0	20.8
15. My community provides adequate financial support for its public school libraries.	28.3	29.2	42.6
16. My community provides adequate financial support for my local public library.	28.1	41.3	30.6

Although the respondents' collective perception that they might benefit from computer technologies (58.4%, item 12) or from more audio-visual materials (53.3%, item 13) were ranked relatively low, both items showed very high (more than 31%) levels of ignorance about their desirability. Therefore, it can be inferred that although the respondents felt well served with books and reference services, a third of them do not know what other kinds of library services might be of use to them or how. The Governor's Conference and other planners might, then, consider addressing the problem of whether, although the state's satisfaction with its library services is high, should it be higher? Can we anticipate being able to please all of the people all of the time? For instance, should we even expect to get a 100% affirmative response to item 4 (dealing with ILL), and not expect users to have to visit other libraries at all (item 11)?

The collective opinion that public and school libraries require increased support from community, state, and federal funds is overwhelming (items 6,7,9,15,16). Only 11 to 21% disagreed with the idea of increased tax support. However, in these items the respondents again admitted to substantial lack of knowledge, especially about the adequacy of local funding for school and public libraries (items 15,16). Increased state support seems preferable to more people than increased federal support; a substantial majority agree that local support is inadequate and must be augmented. (In Nebraska, only 9% of the people surveyed even knew that any tax support went to that state's public libraries.)

These data require us to consider a paradox: How do we reconcile the overall perception of satisfaction with present library services by a clear majority of library users throughout the state with the perceived inadequacy of their support? Does the resolution of this problem require us to aim for a 100% agreement level with the items which provide indexes of satisfaction with library services (nos.1,2,3,4,8,9,14)? Among the implications of the data considered so far are the necessities for libraries to expand their roles in their respective communities, and, in turn, for members of their communities to be made more completely aware of other possibilities for library services and of modes and extents of library funding. Perhaps it is not too far off the mark to suggest that the data support the idea that the public should have increased help in developing their own personal library skills, in order to fully exploit the available services and facilities.

School library services to their special populations rate only 44% from the children's parents (item 14), whereas satisfaction with public library children's services rates 82% (item 3). The Governor's Conference and the State Board of Education must surely consider the reasons for this major disparity, and make recommendations for lessening the difference, if that is, in fact, a desirable goal.

An overwhelming majority agree with the "Freedom to Read" concept (75%, item 5), consistent with stated policies of the American and Massachusetts Library Associations and of the Massachusetts Library Trustees Association. In the face of this clear mandate from the library-using public, one wonders about the desirability (much less feasibility) of trying to lessen the fraction of those who disagree with the concept.

QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES BY SEX

Table IV shows that, by and large, men and women respondents shared the same opinions of overall satisfaction with currently available library services for themselves, but men were less satisfied with the adequacy of both public and school libraries for their children than were women (items 3, 14). Although the men more often had no opinion, this suggests only that mothers are more familiar with their children's educational needs and how well they are being met.

Men were less likely than women to be satisfied with special information services, more often needed to go to other libraries for their special information needs, and less often obtained materials through ILL (items 8,11, 4). However, in these instances the sex-related differences are not very marked, and may well reflect the possibility that men are more likely to visit libraries for answers to questions related to their jobs than for other uses.

Otherwise, men and women agree about the necessity for increased financial support, and about the desirability of computer and A-V materials.

QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES BY HANDICAPPED STATUS

Physically handicapped persons, who comprised 2.7% of the entire sample of respondents, shared the same perceptions of quality of library services, and of needs for additional state and federal funding, with the non-handicapped, as shown in Table V. Although the handicapped respondents are somewhat better satisfied with community support for their public and school libraries (items 15,16) and less often go to other libraries (item 11), the differences are only slight.

QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES BY ETHNIC MINORITY STATUS

Members of ethnic minorities made up 9.3% of the respondents, which is about three times the fraction of the state's population included in the black and other non-white categories in the 1970 census. Blacks were not separated from non-black minorities in the present survey.

In general, as Table VI shows, minority respondents were not remarkably different in their responses from non-minority respondents. The only item for which a meaningful difference might be present is that dealing with the desirability of more A-V materials (item 13), but the large number of respondents with no opinion lessens the strength of the difference. Even so, the apparent increased demand for more A-V materials among the minority respondents suggests that such tools find greater utility in that population, perhaps as a useful supplement to their developing skills in a new language (although it is not certain that the minority respondents who want more A-V materials do not use English as their first language). Items 1 and 2 also suggest that perhaps minority members are not as well served by staff, or in their recreational reading needs, as others, but the differences, if any, are quite small.

	MALES (N=527)		FEMALES (N=1080)	
	AGREE	NO OPINION	AGREE	NO OPINION
1. Staff able to meet my needs	92.1%	3.4%	93.6%	1.2%
2. My own needs for recreational reading satisfied	89.3	2.9	89.7	1.1
3. My children's needs satisfied	75.1	19.3	85.9	5.1
4. Interlibrary Loan utilized	70.3	21.7	79.3	13.1
5. Freedom of access to controversial materials	75.3	4.0	75.5	4.7
6. State should increase financial support	75.6	12.7	71.3	17.7
7. State should provide more books for circulation	74.4	12.3	71.8	16.9
8. My own needs for special information satisfied	65.5	7.3	73.3	6.4
9. Adequate for community as whole	68.9	12.6	71.7	11.7
10. Federal government should increase assistance	69.9	8.3	63.1	15.9
11. I must go to other libraries for some special information needs	69.5	5.3	61.1	8.6
12. Computer technology would be beneficial	60.8	29.5	57.0	34.1
13. Should have more audio-visual materials	57.1	30.4	51.5	31.4
14. My children's needs satisfied in SCHOOL libraries	34.7	31.2	48.3	16.0
15. Community provides adequate support for SCHOOL libraries	29.7	42.2	27.2	42.8
16. Community provides adequate support for PUBLIC libraries	30.4	28.0	26.6	31.7

TABLE IV

Questionnaire responses segregated by sex. All items have been reworded in an abbreviated form which reflects the respondents' opinions about their own local PUBLIC libraries unless otherwise noted; see Table III for the exact wording of the original questionnaire

		HANDICAPPED (N = 43)		NON-HANDICAPPED (N= 1540)	
		AGREE	NO OPINION	AGREE	NO OPINION
1.	Staff able to meet my needs	90.5%	2.4%	93.4%	1.9%
2.	My own needs for recreational reading satisfied	92.9	0	89.7	1.8
3.	My children's needs are satisfied	83.3	8.3	83.0	9.1
4.	Interlibrary Loan utilized	81.1	2.7	76.2	16.3
5.	Freedom of access to controversial materials	75.6	7.3	75.6	4.4
6.	State should increase financial support	75.6	12.2	72.3	16.3
7.	State should provide more books for circulation	71.4	7.1	72.6	15.6
8.	My own needs for special information satisfied	75.6	4.9	70.6	6.8
9.	Adequate for community as whole	77.5	5.0	70.7	11.9
10.	Federal government should increase assistance	64.3	7.1	65.4	13.3
11.	I must go to other libraries for some special information needs	55.3	2.6	64.2	7.5
12.	Computer technology would be beneficial	57.5	30.0	58.4	32.5
13.	Should have more audio-visual materials	54.1	32.4	53.2	31.1
14.	My children's needs satisfied in SCHOOL libraries	50.0	0	44.6	20.5
15.	Community provides adequate support for SCHOOL libraries	39.5	34.2	27.7	43.2
16.	Community provides adequate support for PUBLIC libraries	41.0	15.4	27.6	31.1

TABLE V

Questionnaire responses for handicapped and non-handicapped respondents. All items have been reworded in an abbreviated form which reflects the respondents' opinions about their own local PUBLIC libraries unless otherwise noted; see Table III for the exact wording of the original questionnaire.

	MINORITY RESPONDENTS (N = 135)		NON-MINORITY RESPONDENTS (N = 1320)	
	AGREE	NO OPINION	AGREE	NO OPINION
1. Staff able to meet my needs	87.7%	5.4%	93.7%	1.5%
2. My own needs for recreational reading satisfied	81.7	3.8	90.7	1.2
3. My children's needs are satisfied	86.7	6.7	82.1	9.7
4. Interlibrary Loan utilized	73.1	13.1	76.5	16.6
5. Freedom of access to controversial materials	81.8	3.8	75.4	4.2
6. State should increase financial support	82.7	9.8	71.4	17.0
7. State should provide more books for circulation	81.2	11.3	72.0	15.9
8. My own needs for special information satisfied	65.6	6.9	71.2	6.6
9. Adequate for community as a whole	61.2	16.3	71.0	11.9
10. Federal government should increase assistance	76.5	12.1	64.4	13.3
11. I must go to other libraries for some special information needs	71.2	6.1	63.6	7.2
12. Computer technology would be beneficial	67.7	26.2	58.2	32.5
13. Should have more audio-visual materials	73.3	19.1	51.0	32.6
14. My children's needs satisfied in SCHOOL libraries	36.4	22.7	44.9	20.5
15. Community provides adequate support for SCHOOL libraries	17.8	38.8	28.9	43.1
16. Community provides adequate support for PUBLIC libraries	21.5	30.0	27.8	30.8

TABLE VI

Questionnaire responses for ethnic minority and non-minority respondents. All items reworded in an abbreviated form which reflects the respondents' opinions about their own local PUBLIC libraries unless otherwise noted; see Table III for the exact wording of the original questionnaire.

QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES BY AGE GROUP

As Table VII demonstrates, the respondents' ages were correlated with at least some of their answers. Satisfaction with existing library services (items 1,2,4, 9) and perception of need for increased funding (items 6, 12) tended to increase with age, although the magnitude of the increase is modest and probably not significant. Even if the changes had been remarkable it would have been difficult to differentiate between changing perceptions of needs among respondents of increasing age and libraries' relative abilities to serve users of increasing age.

Interlibrary Loan does seem to be utilized more frequently by respondents in successively older age groups (item 4), which is consistent with the diminishing need to go to other libraries as age increases (item 11). These data are also consistent with those which show that the respondents' needs for special information tend to be more often satisfied as the respondents' age (item 8). Those in the 21-40 age group are least often well served in this respect, and must most often go to other libraries for their special information needs.

Younger respondents were more likely than the older respondents to think that their libraries should have more audio-visual tools and materials (item 13), as might be expected, but the age groups do not differ much in their assessment of the possible benefits of computer technologies (item 12). Data discussed earlier showed that people aged 21-40 visit their local public libraries about 1.67 times a month, whereas the 12-20 year old group go about 2.52 times a month and the oldest respondents go about 1.89 times a month, all of which may reflect differing perceptions of the libarary's usefulness to people of differing ages.

Although the difference is not a remarkable one, it is mildly interesting that respondents in the two youngest age groups agreed that library users should have free access to even controversial printed materials (item 5) more often than the older respondents.

In general, the proportions of respondents holding no opinion about the questionnaire items did not differ with age, although the youngest respondents were more likely to have no opinion (which, in this case can probably be equated with no knowledge) about the needs for additional financial support for public libraries, as would be expected.

		% AGREE, AMONG AGE GROUP:			
		12-20 (N=109)	21-40 (N=650)	41-60 (N=453)	61-87 (N=272)
1.	Staff able to meet my needs	89.4%	91.8%	94.7%	96.3%
2.	My own needs for recreational reading satisfied	86.0	85.4	92.1	97.4
3.	My children's needs are satisfied	54.3	85.6	86.9	56.7
4.	Interlibrary Loan utilized	62.5	69.9	82.2	86.9
5.	Freedom of access to controversial materials	81.3	79.1	70.9	71.3
6.	State should increase financial support	67.0	72.5	71.7	76.2
7.	State should provide more books for circulation	75.4	73.4	72.7	69.3
8.	My own needs for special information satisfied	72.3	59.6	78.0	84.3
9.	Adequate for community as whole	70.8	65.4	74.9	76.7
10.	Federal government should increase assistance	68.1	64.2	62.9	68.3
11.	I must go to other libraries for some special information needs	65.8	73.8	60.8	40.9
12.	Computer technology would be beneficial	53.1	60.8	59.8	48.4
13.	Should have more audio-visual materials	69.6	57.8	47.7	41.2
14.	My children's needs satisfied in SCHOOL libraries	38.2	47.6	42.5	33.3
15.	Community provides adequate support for SCHOOL Libraries	30.4	23.4	32.4	33.2
16.	Community provides adequate support for PUBLIC libraries	25.0	23.0	31.9	34.5

TABLE VII

Questionnaire responses by age group. All items have been reworded in an abbreviated form which reflects the respondents' opinions about their own local PUBLIC libraries unless otherwise noted; see Table III for the exact wording of the original questionnaire. Because of space limitations, frequencies of "no opinion" responses have been omitted here, but they are discussed in the text.

QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES BY FREQUENCY OF LIBRARY USE

Table VIII shows that satisfaction with public library services tends to increase with frequency of library use (items 1,2,3,4, 9). Although the trends are not statistically significant, that for satisfaction with meeting needs for recreational reading is quite marked. On the other hand, the relative dissatisfaction with recreational reading materials among those who use their libraries seldom may reflect the possibility that they use libraries more for special informational needs, such as homework assignments, than for recreation.

Perceptions of the adequacy of community financial support do not show a unidirectional change with frequency of library use, nor do perceptions of need for additional state or federal funding (items 15,16, 6, 10). Respondents who use libraries the least often were the most likely to suggest that the state should provide more books for circulation (item 7). This may reflect a reason for not using libraries more often.

Respondents who use their libraries least often were those most likely to disagree with the "Freedom to Read" controversial materials (item 5), as the most sardonic among us would have expected.

The frequency of "no opinion" responses did not change with the frequency of library use.

	% AGREE, AMONG RESPONDENTS WHO VISIT THEIR PUBLIC LIBRARIES:			
	Seldom (N=17)	Monthly (N=106)	Biweekly (N=501)	Weekly (N=959)
1. Staff able to meet my needs	87.5%	85.8%	94.0%	94.2%
2. My own needs for recreational reading satisfied	64.7	86.7	90.6	90.2
3. My children's needs are satisfied	72.7	77.3	84.3	83.3
4. Interlibrary Loan utilized	35.7	58.4	71.9	80.9
5. Freedom of access to controversial materials	64.7	75.2	78.8	74.0
6. State should increase financial support	75.0	62.1	69.3	75.4
7. State should provide more books for circulation	86.9	70.4	68.5	74.9
8. My own needs for special information satisfied	62.5	67.0	67.3	73.5
9. Adequate for community as whole	60.0	63.1	70.3	72.2
10. Federal government should increase assistance	75.0	57.3	59.1	69.5
11. I must go to other libraries for some special information needs.	68.8	69.5	68.1	60.8
12. Computer technology would be beneficial	68.8	59.0	57.8	58.8
13. Should have more audio-visual materials	57.1	52.9	51.3	53.7
14. My children's needs satisfied in SCHOOL libraries	44.4	46.3	47.0	43.2
15. Community provides adequate support for SCHOOL libraries	33.3	32.7	27.0	28.0
16. Community provides adequate support for PUBLIC libraries	20.0	32.4	26.6	28.4

TABLE VIII

Questionnaire responses by frequency with which respondents visit their local public libraries. All items have been reworded in an abbreviated form which reflects the respondents' opinions about their own local PUBLIC libraries unless otherwise noted; see Table III for the exact wording of the original questionnaire. Because of space limitations, frequencies of "no opinion" responses have been omitted here, but they are discussed in the text.

QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES BY REGION

There were few differences among the opinions expressed by respondents from the three Massachusetts library Regions, as seen in Table IX. People in the Western Region were somewhat more likely to feel that the state should increase its financial support (item 6) and provide more books for circulation (item 7), while Central Region respondents felt the least need for increased state financial assistance. Western Region respondents also indicated that they less fequently must go to other libraries for their special information needs (item 11), although those needs were met no more frequently in their own local libraries (item 8). They more often expressed a need for more audio-visual materials (item 13). Finally, Western Region respondents were more likely to assess their community's support for their public libraries as inadequate (item 16), but not for their local school libraries (item 15). It is, however, moot whether any of these differences are statistically significant.

	% AGREE, BY REGION		
	Eastern (N=1078)	Central (N=206)	Western (N=264)
1. Staff able to meet my needs	93.1%	93.2%	94.3%
2. My own needs for recreational reading satisfied	89.8	90.2	89.4
3. My children's needs are satisfied	83.5	85.2	78.7
4. Interlibrary Loan utilized	75.7	77.7	77.6
5. Freedom of access to controversial materials	75.7	72.3	74.2
6. State should increase financial support	72.2	67.3	79.1
7. State should provide more books for circulation	70.3	76.4	79.0
8. My own needs for special information satisfied	71.5	68.4	72.7
9. Adequate for community as whole	69.7	76.1	70.6
10. Federal government should increase assistance	65.6	61.8	66.9
11. I must go to other libraries for some special information needs	63.7	66.0	56.7
12. Computer technology would be beneficial	59.0	59.1	54.6
13. Should have more audio-visual materials	51.4	53.0	59.8
14. My children's needs satisfied in SCHOOL libraries	45.4	43.6	40.6
15. Community provides adequate support for SCHOOL libraries	28.0	28.4	29.6
16. Community provides adequate support for PUBLIC libraries	29.4	30.1	21.7

TABLE IX

Questionnaire responses by Region (in state Regional Library System). All items have been reworded in an abbreviated form which reflects the respondents' opinions about their own local PUBLIC libraries unless otherwise noted; see Table III for the exact wording of the original questionnaire. Frequencies of "no opinion" responses have been omitted here, but did not differ for any item among the three Regions.

QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES BY SIZE OF COMMUNITY

In order to have sufficient numbers of respondents in each category for appropriate analysis, the six standard population size groups were consolidated into three. The results are tabulated in Table X. Although the strengths of the trends are only modest, it is consistently clear that as population size increases the respondents tend to be less well satisfied with the library services provided to them (items 1, 2, 3, 4,9). Respondents in the largest cities were more likely to think that they might benefit from increased audio-visual materials and computer technologies in their libraries (items 12,13). Finally, respondents from the largest cities least often thought their community's financial support of their school or public libraries is adequate, although they also displayed the greatest frequency of "no opinion" responses, which may also indicate that people in the largest cities are the least knowledgeable about the actual extent of their libraries' tax support (items 15,16). People from the largest cities, presumably in corollary opinions, were more likely than people from smaller cities and towns to think that the state or, especially, the federal government should increase their support of local public libraries (items 6, 7, 10).

	% AGREE IN TOWNS WITH POPULATIONS OF		
	0 to 10,000	10,000-50,000	50,000-100,000+
1. Staff able to meet my needs	96.2%	94.0%	91.6%
2. My own needs for recreational reading satisfied	90.7	92.3	87.3
3. My children's needs are satisfied	84.9	85.0	80.3
4. Interlibrary Loan utilized	89.1	73.1	73.5
5. Freedom of access to controversial materials	70.7	76.3	75.8
6. State should increase financial support	71.0	66.9	78.4
7. State should provide more books for circulation	73.6	64.4	79.0
8. My own needs for special information satisfied	66.0	75.8	69.7
9. Adequate for community as whole	71.8	75.3	66.2
10. Federal government should increase assistance	62.8	54.5	75.6
11. I must go to other libraries for some special information needs	61.1	60.0	66.0
12. Computer technology would be beneficial	54.3	56.6	61.5
13. Should have more audio-visual materials	52.0	48.8	57.1
14. My children's needs satisfied in SCHOOL libraries	40.8	47.0	43.6
15. Community provides adequate support for SCHOOL libraries	36.5	35.8	18.6
16. Community provides adequate support for PUBLIC libraries	31.6	34.6	21.4

TABLE X

Questionnaire responses by size of respondents' communities. All items have been reworded in an abbreviated form which reflects the respondents' opinions about their own local PUBLIC libraries unless otherwise noted; see Table III for the exact wording of the original questionnaire. Because of space limitations, frequencies of "No opinion" responses are omitted here, but they are discussed in the text.

DETAILED ANALYSES

The data summarized in this section of the Survey report were derived from cross-tabulations and chi-squared analyses of the definitely positive and negative opinions expressed by the respondents, omitting the "no opinion" responses. When the calculated chi-squared values yielded probability levels of less than 0.05 (expressed below as $P < 0.05$), indicating that there is less than a five per cent chance that the computed chi-squared is not the result of a purely chance or random association), the conclusions reported could be said to be statistically significant, following a common convention. Similarly, probability levels of less than 0.01 indicate even stronger associations. (In fact, at least 75 % of all the P levels of less than 0.01 actually were less than 0.0001, but expressing results of this strength would be superfluous.) In the text below, then, probability levels are written as $P < 0.05$, $P < 0.01$, or N.S. (Not Significantly associated) for each pair of opinions studied simultaneously.

The data interpretations given below may seem to be rather tortuously worded. Such wording is, however, necessitated by the nature of the statistical analysis employed, because it is designed to test the "null hypothesis" (for which see any elementary statistics text).

Item 2: My own needs for recreational reading are well served at my local public library

89.7%	AGREED
8.5%	DISAGREED
1.8%	NO OPINION

A. If the respondents' recreational reading needs are NOT being met in their public libraries, their special information needs are four times more likely also to be unmet (77%) than among those respondents whose recreational reading needs ARE being met (18%) ($P < 0.01$).

B. If the respondents' recreational reading needs are NOT being met, their children's needs (item 3) are seven times more likely also to be unmet (43%) than among those respondents whose recreational reading needs ARE being met (6%) ($P < 0.01$).

C. If the respondents' recreational reading needs are NOT being met, the staffs of their local public libraries (item 1) are eight times more likely also to be felt to be inadequate (24%) than among those whose recreational reading needs ARE being met (3%) ($P < 0.01$).

D. If the respondents' recreational reading needs are NOT being met, their local public libraries are four times more likely also to be perceived as inadequate to the respondents' communities (item 9) (68%) than among those whose recreational reading needs ARE being met (15%) ($P < 0.01$).

SUMMARY: Libraries unable to satisfy their users' needs for recreational reading are also unlikely to meet the users' other kinds of needs.

Item 8: My own needs for special information (e.g., medical business, how-to-do-it, etc.) are well served at my local public library.

70.9% AGREED
27.3% DISAGREED
6.8% NO OPINION

A. If the respondents' special information needs are NOT being met in their local public libraries, the library staffs are eight times more likely to be felt in be inadequate (item 1) (15%) than among those whose special information needs ARE being met (2%) ($P < 0.01$).

B. If the respondents' special information needs are NOT being met, their libraries are four times more likely to be perceived as being inadequate to their communities (item 9) (46%) than among those whose special information needs ARE being met (12%) ($P < 0.01$).

SUMMARY: Libraries unable to satisfy their users' needs for special information are alsounlikely to meet the users' other kinds of needs.

Item 3: My children's needs are well served at my local public library.

82.4% AGREED
8.0% DISAGREED
9.6% NO OPINION

A. If the respondents' children's needs are NOT well served at their PUBLIC libraries, the respondents are eight times more likely to perceive the public library staff as being inadequate to the respondents' needs (item 1) (17%) than are respondents who think that their children's needs ARE well served at their public libraries (2%) ($P < 0.01$).

B. If the respondents' children's needs are NOT being met at the local PUBLIC library, it is more than four times as likely that that library will be perceived as inadequate to the community as a whole (item 9) (68%) compared to those respondents whose children's needs ARE being met at their local public libraries (15%) ($P < 0.01$).

C. If the respondents' children's needs are NOT well served at their PUBLIC libraries, it is twice as likely that the children are also poorly served at the SCHOOL libraries (item 4) (75%) than among those whose children's needs ARE well served at their public libraries (41%) ($P < 0.01$).

SUMMARY: Public libraries unable to satisfy children's needs are also unlikely to meet others' needs, and to be in communities which have unsatisfactory school libraries as well.

Item 6: The state should provide more assistance to my local public library in the form of direct financial aid.

73.0% AGREE
11.1% DISAGREE
15.9% NO OPINION

A. If the respondents' recreational reading needs ARE being met (item 2) the respondents are insignificantly more likely to see NO need for increased state financial aid (14%) than are respondents whose recreational reading needs are NOT being met (9%) (N.S.).

B. Respondents whose special information needs ARE being met in their public libraries (item 8) (14%) are just as likely as those whose special information needs are NOT being met (13%) to see no need for increased state financial assistance (N.S.).

C. Respondents whose children's needs ARE being met in their public libraries (item 3) are just as likely as those whose children's needs are NOT being met to see no need for increased state funding (13%, 12%, respectively (N.S.).

D. Respondents whose needs ARE being met by their local public library staffs (item 1) are just as likely as those whose needs are NOT being met by staffs to see no need for increased state funding (13%, 12%, respectively) (N.S.).

E. Respondents who feel that their local public libraries ARE adequate for their communities (item 9) are about three times as likely to see no need for increased state monies for their libraries (17%) as those who feel their local libraries are NOT adequate for their communities (6%) ($P < 0.01$).

SUMMARY: By and large, perceived needs for increased state funding for public libraries are not particularly associated with inadequacies in meeting any special neds, but are associated with inadequate service to the entire community.

Item 7: The state should provide more assistance to my local public library in the form of books made available for circulation.

73.0% AGREE
11.7% DISAGREE
15.3% NO OPINION

(N.B.: It is not clear from the survey that any of the respondents know that, in fact, books for circulation are regularly made available through the Regional Syscem, but then the questionnaire was not designed to ascertain the extent of that knowledge.)

A. If respondents' recreational reading needs ARE being met (item 2), they are twice as likely to see no need for the state to provide more books for circulation (15%) than are respondents whose recreational reading needs are NOT being met (7%) ($P < 0.05$).

B. If respondents' special information needs ARE being met (item 8) they are 1½ times more likely to see no need for the state to provide more books for circulation (15%) than are respondents whose special information needs are NOT being met (10%) ($P < 0.05$).

C. If their children's needs ARE being met at public libraries (item 3), the respondents are twice as likely to see no need for the state to provide more books for circulation (15%) than are respondents whose children's needs are NOT being satisfied (7%), but the difference is not a meaningful one (N.S.).

D. Respondents whose needs ARE being met by their local library staffs (item 1) are just as likely to see no need for the state to provide more books (14%) as are respondents whose needs are NOT being met by library staffs (11%) (N.S.).

E. Respondents who feel their local public libraries ARE adequate for their respective communities (item 9) are just as likely to see no need for the state to provide more books (13%) as those who feel that their local libraries are NOT adequate for their communities (12%) (N.S.).

SUMMARY: The need for the state to provide books for circulation through public libraries seems to be determined by the respondents' own needs for reading and reference materials, not by less specific needs.

Item 10: <u>The federal government should take a greater role in financing or otherwise improving local library service.</u>

65.8% AGREE
20.9% DISAGREE
13.3% NO OPINION

A. If their recreational reading needs ARE being met in their local public libraries (item 2), respondents are 1½ times more likely to see no need for increased federal support to libraries (25%) than are respondents whose recreational reading needs are NOT being met (17%) ($P < 0.05$).

B. If their special information needs ARE being met (item 8), respondents are just as likely to see no need for increased federal support (26%) as are respondents whose special information needs are NOT being met (22%) (N.S.)

C. If their children's needs ARE being met (item 3), respondents are just as likely to see no need for increased federal support (26%) as are those whose children's needs are NOT being met (22%) (N.S.).

D. If their public library staffs ARE able to meet their needs (item 1), respondents are twice as likely to see no need for increased federal support (25%) as are respondents whose needs are NOT being met by library staffs (11%) ($P < 0.05$).

E. If they think that their public libraries ARE adequate to their communities' needs (item 9), the respondents are less than half as likely to see no need for increased federal support (9%) as are respondents who think their libraries are NOT adequate for their communities (23%) ($P < 0.05$).

F. Respondents who think that the state need NOT provide more financial assistance to public libraries (item 6) are much more likely to think that the federal government should increase its role (78%) than are those who think that the state SHOULD provide more funds to libraries (13%) ($P < 0.01$).

SUMMARY: Needs for increased federal support for public libraries seem to be tied to needs for recreational reading materials and to staff quality, much as are needs for increased state support; and increased federal support seems to be desirable to fewer people than increased state support.

Item 16: My community provides adequate financial support for my local public library.

28.1% AGREE
41.3% DISAGREE
30.6% NO OPINION

A. Respondents who feel that their communities do NOT provide adequate support for their public libraries are five times more likely to think that their recreational reading needs are NOT being met (item 2) (15%) than are those who think their communities DO provide adequate support (3%) ($P < 0.01$).

B. Respondents who think that their communities do NOT provide adequate support for their public libraries are about twice as likely to think that their special information needs are NOT being met in their libraries (31%) as are those who think their communities DO provide adequate support (17%) ($P < 0.01$).

C. Respondents who think their communities do NOT give adequate financial support to their public libraries are almost four times more likely to think that their children's needs (item 3) are NOT met in those libraries (14%) than are those who think their communities DO give their libraries adequate support (4%) ($P < 0.01$).

D. Respondents who think their communities do NOT give adequate financial support to their public libraries are about five times more likely to think the libraries' staffs are NOT able to meet their needs (item 1) (9%) than are those who think their communities DO provide adequate support (2%) ($P < 0.01$).

E. Respondents who think their communities do NOT provide adequate financial support to their public libraries are about fourteen times more likely to think that their libraries are insufficient to their communities' needs (item 9) (41%) than are those who think their communities DO provide adequate support (3%) ($P < 0.01$).

F. Respondents who think their communities DO give adequate support to their public libraries are about seven times more likely to see no need for increased state financial support (item 6) (33%) than are those who think that their communities do NOT provide adequate support (5%) ($P < 0.01$).

G. Respondents who think their communities DO give adequate support to their libraries are five times more likely to see no need for increased state aid in the form of books for circulation (item 7) (34%) than are those tho think their communities do NOT provide adequate support (7%) ($P < 0.01$).

H. Respondents who think their communities DO give adequate support to their public libraries are about four times more likely to see no need for increased federal government support for public libraries (item 10) (46%) than are those who think their communities do NOT provide adequate financial support (13%) ($P < 0.01$).

I. Respondents who think that their communities DO give adequate support to their public libraries are half as likely to need to visit another library for their special information needs (item 11) (24%) as are those who think their communities do NOT provide adequate support (44%) ($P < 0.01$).

SUMMARY: Inadequate community financial support for public libraries is associated with unmet needs of all kinds. If community support for libraries is inadequate, needs for outside support are more frequently perceived.

Item 1: <u>On the whole, the staff in my local library are sufficiently able to meet my needs.</u>

93.0% AGREE
5.1% DISAGREE
2.0% NO OPINION

A. Library staff members are unable to meet the respondents' needs ten times more often among those respondents who think their libraries are NOT adequate for their communities (item 9) (20%) than among those who think their public libraries ARE adequate for their communities (2%) ($P < 0.01$).

B. When library staffs are unable to meet the respondents' needs, the respondents are almost four times more likely NOT to get interlibrary loan materials (item 4) (30%) than if they DO get interlibrary loan materials (8%) ($P < 0.01$)

C. Respondents who see no need for increased federal government support of libraries (item 10) are twice as likely to think that their public library staff are sufficient to meet their needs (25%) as among those who think the staffs are NOT able to meet their needs (11%) ($P < 0.05$).

D. However, as was noted in earlier paragraphs, the respondents' perceptions of need for increased state or federal funds were not associated with the library staffs' abilities to meet the respondents needs.

SUMMARY: Inadequate library staff abilities seem to be associated with inadequate funding levels, and are mirrored in the frequency of interlibrary loan utilization.

Item 4: <u>If the special information, or book, I need is not available in my local public library, the librarian usually gets it for me from another library</u>.

76.1% AGREE
8.0% DISAGREE
15.9% NO OPINION

A. Respondents whose librarians DO get materials for them through interlibrary loan are one-third as likely to have their recreational reading needs unmet (item 2)(7%) as those whose librarians do NOT get interlibrary loan materials for them (25%)($P < 0.01$).

B. Respondents whose librarians DO get materials for them through interlibrary loan are three times more likely not to have to go to other libraries for at least some of their information needs (item 11) (34%) than are those whose librarians do NOT get interlibrary loan materials for them (13%) ($P < 0.01$).

C. Respondents whose librarians DO get interlibrary loan materials for them are one-fourth as likely to feel that their local library staff members are unable to meet their needs (item 1) as those whose librarians do NOT get interlibrary loan materials for them (18%) ($P < 0.01$).

SUMMARY: Interlibrary loan services are probably underutilized in the state's Regional Library System, apparently associated with some property of the staff involved (because the service is potentially available to <u>all</u> library patrons in the state).

Item 13: My local public library should have more audio-visual materials (e.g., films, recordings, etc.).

53.3% AGREE
15.6% DISAGREE
31.1% NO OPINION

A. Respondents who think their libraries SHOULD have more A-V materials are more than twice as likely to feel that their recreational reading needs are unmet (item 2) (12%) than are those who see NO need for more A-V materials (5%) ($P < 0.05$).

B. The frequency with which needs for more A-V materials are perceived is not linked to whether the respondents' children's needs are met (item 3) or not (90% in both cases (N.S.).

C. Respondents who see NO need for increased state financial aid to public libraries (item 6) are only one-half as likely to want more A-V materials (48%) as those who think state aid SHOULD be increased (84%) ($P < 0.01$).

SUMMARY: There seems to be no special dichotomy in the respective goals that can be facilitated with A-V materials as opposed to printed materials. In addition, it would seem that those who want more A-V materials recognize that additional funds for them will be needed.

Item 15: My community provides adequate financial support for its public school libraries.

28.3% AGREE
29.2% DISAGREE
42.6% NO OPINION

A. Respondents who think that their communities DO give adequate support to their school libraries are much less often dissatisfied with the school libraries' services to their children (item 14) (25%) than are those who think that their communities do NOT adequately support their school libraries (63%) ($P < 0.01$).

B. When the respondents' children's needs are NOT met at their SCHOOL libraries (item 14) it is four times more likely that their needs are also unmet in PUBLIC libraries (item 3) (17%) than when their needs ARE met in school libraries (4%) ($P < 0.01$).

SUMMARY: Community financial support for both school and public libraries is associated with the public's satisfaction with them.

Item 5: I believe users of my local library should have free access to printed materials of all kinds, regardless of political views or sexual content expressed in them.

75.2% AGREE
20.1% DISAGREE
4.8% NO OPINION

Agreement with the "Freedom to Read" policiy is not dependent on whether the respondents' recreational reading needs are met (item 2) (79%) or not (81%), although, as noted earlier, agreement is greatest among those who visit libraries the most often.

HIGHLIGHTS AND SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS

Twenty per cent of 8400 questionnaires distributed to a representative sampling of public libraries throughout Massachusetts were returned and analyzed. Those returned were entirely representative of the state's population and of the size of library services represented, although communities with the most "active" library services were more likely to return more questionnaires than those with less "active" services.

Few, if any, remarkable differences could be ascertained between men and women, handicapped and non-handicapped persons, ethnic minority and non-minority persons, or among age groups, the three state Library Regions, or cities and towns of differing sizes, in respects of their opinions about library services and their funding needs. However, the frequency of library use did appear to be least in the Eastern Region, and greatest among the youngest and oldest respondents.

The results reflect a general satisfaction with public library services throughout the state, at least insofar as users know what they want and what is available in the way of library services. Satisfaction tends to increase with increasing frequency of library usage. However, it appears that some special services, such as interlibrary loan, are not being fully exploited by the state's public librarians in behalf of their users. In addition, users' needs for special information are much less frequently met than are their needs for recreational reading, to which it also seems that both users and librarians give special emphasis.

Parents of school children think that the state's school libraries provide adequate services to their children only about half as frequently as public libraries do (although no data are available to indicate whether the respondents recognized that school and public libraries have different missions).

Library patrons do not, by and large, recognize the potential benefits to be gained from the introduction of computer technologies and increased audio-visual materials to their libraries.

Nearly a fourth of the respondents are willing to restrict library patrons' access to politically or sexually controversial materials, an attitude which contrasts sharply with the ALA Freedom to Read statement which has been endorsed by the Massachusetts Library Association and the Massachusetts Library Trustees Association. Those who would impose such restrictions use libraries less often than those who would not impose them.

When libraries are felt to be inadequate in one kind of service area they are likely to be inadequate in most other services as well. The provision of inadequate library services by both school and public libraries is closely linked with perceptions of inadequate funding for both. That is, augmented funding levels should be earmarked more for the "have-not" libraries than for the "haves."

The Survey reflects a clear mandate for increased state and federal financial assistance for libraries (although state support seems to be preferred), especially of large city libraries, a view which is underscored by the widespread opinion that community financial support of both school and public libraries is inadequate to community needs.

Although other interpretations of the available data may occur to readers of this report, these would seem to be the conclusions that can be most easily discussed and acted upon, where necessary, at all levels throughout the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

J. Worth Estes, M.D.
1 April 1978